

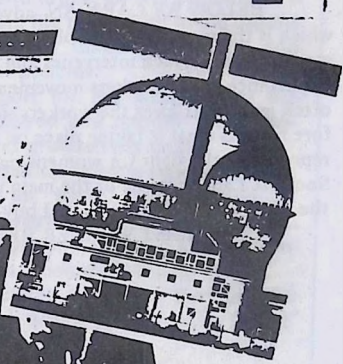
Socialist Worker Review

Incorporating THE WORKER

15p

4

The car
industry



No Nukes
is Good
Nukes!

END
COURTS
AND
MILITARY
REPRESSION

Repression

WE WILL FIGHT
TO THE BITTER END.
NO QUARTER GIVEN
ALL OUR WORKERS ARE
TOGETHER. DIVIDED WE
FALL UNITED WE STAND

Fraud & WHAT IS OUR
GOVERNMENT
DOING. WE PAID OUR
TAXES, OUR STAMP
AND PAY RELATED BENEFITS
BUT OUR BOSS DIDNT

The unions



SOCIALIST WORKER REVIEW

BELOW WE CARRY AN advert for SOCIALIST LABOUR which is the monthly paper of the Socialist Labour Party. It is a workers paper which intervenes and gives a lead on matters of importance in the workers movement, which the capitalist press often ignores. It gives the workers side of the storey, and therefore reflects what is taking place on the shop floor, the fight against repression, the fight for womens rights, etc. A paper such as Socialist Labour is one of the main instruments we have to build the SLP, all our readers should buy it and sell it.

SOCIALIST WORKER REVIEW is produced by the

members of the Socialist Workers Tendency in the SLP. Because part of the process of building the SLP consists of developing the ideas, the methods, the strategies without which no party can grow. Socialist Worker Review aims to contribute to that growth by encouraging discussion in the Party and in the working class movement in general. The development of political analysis among all those interested in socialist ideas must help the development of the SLP as a workers' party and the spread of socialist politics.

WE feel there is a need for both papers, each has its own job to do.

SOCIALIST LABOUR is published monthly by the Socialist Labour Party, at 9 Parnell Sq., Dublin 1. Annual subscription costs £2.

If you would like to join or want further information about the SLP write to the above address.



**MONTHLY
SOCIALIST
LABOUR PARTY
SOCIALIST
LABOUR**

Contents

SEPTEMBER



Above: Police charging a Transport Workers' Union meeting in O'Connell St on "Bloody Sunday" - August 31st, 1913.

Two months later the Irish Citizen Army was founded as a workers' defence force against police brutality.

INTERNATIONAL	
Spain, Kenya and Rhodesia	4
PRISONERS	
Yana Mintoff of the Socialist Workers Party in Gt. Britain, writes about conditions in English jails.....	5
THE UNIONS	
Reports on Confexin and Cladyknit strikes, the motor industry and the ITGWU.....	6,7,8
CARNMORE POINT	
David Byrne reports.....	9
COALISLAND - DUNGANNON	
By Joan Kelly.....	10,11
CHEZOSLAVAKIA John Goodwillie John Goodwillie writes on the 10th. anniversary of the Russian invasion.....	12,13
THE CURRAGH	
F. Burns reports on the Curragh prison camp.....	14
LETTERS	15
SOCIALISM AND FEMINISM	
Mary Gordon Mary Gordon continues the debate.....	16,17
CIVIL RIGHTS	
Ed. Moloney.....	18
ADVISE OR ACTION	
Kieran Allen on 'Clinics'.....	19
ASBESTOS	
Health and Safety By Brian McKenna.....	20,21
REVIEWS	
No Mean Fighter Harry McShane How Long Will South Africa Last R. Johnson Tom Robinson Band.....	22,23

Socialist Worker Review

Socialist Worker Review is produced by a group of members of the Socialist Labour Party. The magazine is published monthly and will argue for the following points:

Opposition to National Wage Agreements or wage restraint in any form and argue for the building of a rank and file movement in the unions to fight for union democracy and militant policies.

Support for the struggles of the unemployed and oppose redundancies and productivity deals.

Opposition to state repression and argue for trade union action to oppose repression.

Support for the women's struggle in all areas, economic and social.

A socialist answer to the national question based on the unity of the working class.

The supporters of the magazine will constitute the Socialist Workers Tendency.

Readers are invited to write articles, letters or comments and contribute to the development of a revolutionary tendency in the SLP.

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international news

RHODESIA

Undermining Smith

Time is running out for Ian Smith "internal settlement" in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). Whites are emigrating at the rate of 1000 a month. The strongest black party involved in the internal settlement, Bishop Abel Muzorewa's UANC is seeing the frequent departure of important leaders who refuse to tolerate any longer the Bishop's craven surrenders to Smith.

White and black Ministers in the 'transitional government' are turning up to meetings in rural areas to explain the settlement, and finding none there. This happened on August 28th in the tribal area of Chief Jeremiah Chirau, leader of ZUPU. On the 17 of August, Chief Chirau had been forced to call for a conference between the transitional government and the Patriotic Front, admitting "Whether we like it or not, the majority of our people want an all-party conference and we must listen to their voice". Earlier, the assembled chiefs of Matabeleland had called for Joshua Nkomo, co-leader of the Patriotic Front, to join the transitional government.

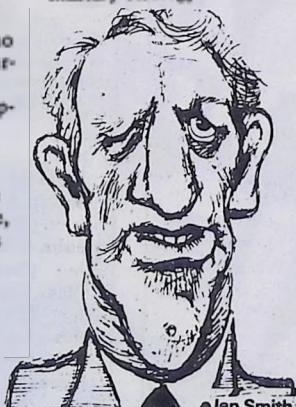
If the traditional chiefs, who are living off government salaries are forced in this way to acknowledge the massive support for the Patriotic Front its support in the cities must be far greater. Its support in the cities, where the chiefs have little influence, must be far greater. The cities are the centres of the black working class. And their populations are growing. There are estimated to be 250,000 black refugees in Bulawayo people who have come in to escape from the "protected

villages" - barbed wire camps into which they are herded while their fields and their cattle pastures become free fire zones for the Rhodesian Army.

The guerilla campaign continues to grow, with military operations now extending into the capital, Salisbury.

Britain and America continue their efforts to bring about an all-party conference, which are basically aimed at bringing the Patriotic Front into a new-style transitional government to prepare a political transfer of power to the blacks, while retaining the white-dominated capitalist economy. Or if that proves impossible, to bring in at least Nkomo's ZAPU. But if that happened, Robert Mugabe's ZANU could continue the war through the 600 mile frontier with Mozambique.

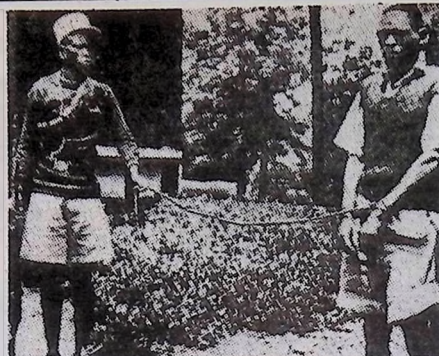
There may therefore be Western economic pressure on Mozambique to refuse facilities to Mugabe. And Mugabe, despite being described as a Marxist, has not shown himself willing to mobilise the black working class - the only alternative to a purely military strategy.



© Ian Smith.

shown just how unstable is the situation in Spain. The murder of young revolutionary in Pamplona brought a smoldering situation to the boil. The strength of the extreme Right wing organisation Fuerza Nueva in the police and army explains what was clearly a deliberate provocation. Hardly a day passes without similar attacks by an extreme right screaming for the restoration of 'law and order'.

The main reformist parties, the Spanish CP and PSOE are busily compromising with Suarez; the CP has expressed support



Jomo Kenyatta, after his arrest in 1952

KENYATTA HIS LEGACY

Last month, political leaders of all shades of opinion flocked to Kenya to pay tribute to Jomo Kenyatta on his death. James Callaghan said he was a good friend of Britain - forgetting that their relations were not always that friendly. Tributes also came from 'less respectable' leaders.

Speaking at Dungannon, Richard Behal of Provisional Sinn Féin said that Kenyatta had once been branded as a terrorist but was later welcomed to Buckingham Palace;

REASON

But the reason for his warm welcome and the glowing tributes after his death was that he was a leader in the tradition of a Collins or a De Valera. He had immense personal prestige in Kenya. He had been found guilty of organising the rebellion nicknamed "Mau Mau" by the British - though he always insisted that he did not organise it.

The British press helped to make the myth that "Mau Mau" represented an upsurge

for both the government and the monarchy and is striving to be 'responsible'. In the end, they will find themselves having to support further repression or risk losing their new-found respectability.

In Euzkadi, for example, the strength of the revolutionary left in the Workers Commissions shows that not everyone believes the way to respond to the Right is to lay down your arms. Everything now depends on the ability of Spanish revolutionaries to organise and build a forceful response in the workplaces.

of 'primitive savagery' against innocent whites. In fact more white civilians died in car accidents in the capital city, Nairobi, than died at the hands of the 'Mau Mau'. Thirty two in number. Yet the British army executed 1,000 blacks and over 11,000 died in the brutal repression that took place in the five years after the British troops went in.

'Mau Mau' was the name the British gave to a movement of poor black farmers mainly from the largest tribe, the Kikuyu. They called their movement the Land and Freedom Army. The whites, amking up just 1 per cent of the population owned 20 per cent of the land. Starvation faced many blacks who were forced to live in Reserves by their white masters.

TRAGEDY

The tragedy was that Kenyatta betrayed the people who gave him power. Having achieved political office, he devoted his energies to encouraging the whites to remain on in Kenya and retain their economic power. Today large white owned farms occupy vast areas of the best agricultural land. Private enterprise remains supreme. Foreign investment is welcomed. The working class is kept in check through state control of the trade unions.

And Kenyatta's former deputy, Oginga Odinga, who wanted to free the trade unions and nationalise many industries, was jailed and his party banned.

DETAINED AT HER MAJESTY'S PLEASURE

THERE ARE OVER one hundred Irish political prisoners in English jails. Before being found guilty of any crime they are singled out for special 'attention' by the screws. One Irish Prisoner of War writes from Brixton: 'we are often held for 12 months or more on remand, we are kept in a special security unit of the jail and are classified as Category A. Everywhere the P.O.W. goes he is accompanied by two warders who, in a book containing his photo, record every move the prisoner makes and every word he says. Close circuit T.V. Cameras among other devices monitor everything in the special unit and exercise yard. At night, powerful spot lights are beamed directly into the cells making sleep practically impossible'.

A guilty verdict is invariably guaranteed in every Irish trial. The courts become fortresses, patrolled by snipers and sniffer dogs. Jurors, lawyers, judges and all spectators are frisked on entering and the supposedly still innocent defendants arrive in a convoy of cars with horns blaring. The evidence on which convictions are made are the flimsiest accepted in any court. Many prisoners have been given life sentences solely on the basis of alleged confessions, extorted by violence before the trial.

GUILDFORD

In the case of the Guildford and Woolwich bombings, Paul Hill got life, Gerry Conlon at least 35 years, Paddy Armstrong at least 30 years and Carole Richardson, indefinite: purely on the evidence of extorted confessions. Two years later in 1977, four young Irish men arrested in the Balcombe Street siege publicly admitted to the Guildford and Woolwich bombings. They were ignored.

In this way innocent people have been imprisoned for massive periods. A combination of the use of agents and informers like Kenneth Lennon; of draconian legislation like the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Conspiracy Acts; of police propaganda, evidence of political beliefs and 'confessions' extorted by violence; gives the police a license to pick any Irish activist up and condemn her/him to life in a solitary cell.

It was the torture and brutality suffered inside security units of prisons like Hull, Gartree, Albany, Wakefield, Wandsworth, Parkhurst, that caused the deaths of four Irish prisoners in the past few years. State legalised brutality has killed Michael Gaughin, Frank Stagg, Timothy Noonan and Noel Jenkinson. On 12th February 1976, Frank Stagg died in Wakefield jail after three years of almost constant solitary confinement and strip searches, and without any books or property. He demanded the right to political status and the right to serve his prison sentence in his own country and went on hunger strike to this end. Two weeks after he died, the Labour Government admitted that 27 soldiers convicted of crimes in Northern Ireland had been transferred to serve their sentences in England. This is what they call British justice.

In August 1976, the prisoners in Hull organised a riot and took over the roof of the jail. Irish political prisoners were prominent in this protest against prison brutality and flew a tricolour from the roof. As a result, Irish political prisoners were singled out for vicious beatings. Sean Campbell, for instance, who was serving 10 years for 'conspiring to rob persons unknown at a time and place unknown was among those attacked by screws in Albany in Sept. 1976. He was left with a

Terrorism means the use of violence for political ends



broken arm, a broken leg and broken ribs. One month later Noel Jenkinson, serving a life sentence in the security unit of Leicester Prison, died. The prison coroner recorded death by heart attack and refused the Prisoners Aid Committee request to hold an independent autopsy. His death came the morning after a screw had been shot dead in Derry.

PROTEST

A few weeks ago Republican prisoners in English jails staged another well organised protest and hunger strike for political status and an end to prison brutality. For 52 long hours they held the roof of Gartree Prison in Leicester. They were not only showing strength in taking the roof but absolute determination to face the consequences of their protest in the private hells of their cells.

One day later, on July 9th, three thousand people marched through London in a demonstration called by the Prisoners Aid Committee to end the silence on torture of Irish Prisoners of War. Not one British national paper reported the fact that a march had even taken place. We were not surprised: the conspiracy of silence extends from the War in Northern Ireland to the brutalisation of Irish political prisoners and to any protest against these. We can only break this silence by unity of all forces who oppose British rule in Northern Ireland. Our immediate intention is to fully expose the brutality that political prisoners are suffering, especially in H Block Longkesh beginning with a national tour with two women from Central Belfast late this September.

By YANA MINTOFF
(Socialist Workers Party,
Gr. Britain)

SPAIN

LAST MONTH, the murder of two military men by an obscure terrorist group in Madrid, has provoked the extreme Right into public hysteria. They must feel very confident, however, that their loud demands for large scale repression and martial law will have the required effect. Greater repression, a 'firmer attitude' from Suarez' government.

Recent events in Euzkadi (the Basque country) have

THE UNIONS

BREAKING THROUGH THE WAGE AGREEMENT

SO FAR: NO MAJOR GROUP OF industrial workers in the South has directly challenged the new National Wage Agreement, which severely holds down workers' wages and restricts the right to strike. If there has been no set-piece battle, there have, however, been many minor skirmishes - and mostly successful ones at that. Perhaps the most significant and widespread have been those in Dublin motor industry and allied trades. We take a closer look at the victories won in this area by militant trade union action.

When pickets were mounted by the Fiat clerical workers, not alone had they started a dispute which would last six weeks (the longest in the company's history), but they had triggered off a series of disputes and advances which have opened up the motor and allied industry and altered worker's thinking on many aspects of militant action. Set against a background of 'hard-line' F.U.E. attacks on strikes, and the intervention of the government in the protracted Aer Lingus and Post Office disputes, the Fiat workers succeeded in obtaining all their demands, including a £6 per week increase above the NWA. Others were soon to follow their lead.

With the passing of the new NWA the traditional cry of 'what can we do, our hands are tied' was soon heard from employers (and echoed by most trade union officials) when confronted with wage claims from the workers. However, the new agreement has a clause which allows negotiation of a 2% extra increase at local level. It was this clause that gave workers in the Dublin motor industry their 'foot in the door'. But once negotiations were started, it wasn't 2% they wanted, £30 and £20 claims went in all over the industry. Pauls Garage Group negotiated and got £7 extra. Sweeney and Forte followed with £3 and Clutch Services had equal success with their claim. In Massey Ferguson workers who had been through five months of fruitless negotiations called 'enough' and struck. After a week long unofficial strike (it was made official on the day of settlement) they returned with huge increases of up to £18 for their general and skilled workers. Large increases (up to £12) have also been negotiated at O'Sheas, this time without recourse to strike action.

A feature of those disputes where strike action has been necessary, has been the willingness of workers in unaffected sections of the plant (whether in the same union or not) to support their fellow workers in dispute - despite the recently reaffirmed policy of the ICTU to maintain the strike - breaking 'all-out' picketing policy. During the Fiat strike, for example, ATGWU, ITGWU and AGEMOU production workers refused to pass the pickets of the AGEMOU clerical workers. The same happened in a dispute in Smiths Garages where a shop steward was suspended for refusing to carry out new duties pending the settlement of a productivity deal. The AGEMOU workers struck fourteen depots and the allied firms of Rucon and CRV. ALL WORKERS GAVE TOTAL SUPPORT, including the AUEW members at CRV. The dispute was settled with reinstatement for the shop steward and £7 increase all

round. A good example was the dispute at Sherrard's Machinery plant. Here the workers struck without waiting for the end of the interminable negotiations. Within two weeks their strike had been made official and within another week they were back at work with increases of between £4 and £8.

Together with solidarity from unaffected workers, a major feature of these disputes has been the willingness of the workers involved to take direct action immediately over their claims, not waiting for the cumbersome machinery of local and national procedures. The task now is to consolidate these gains into an ongoing rank and file organisation in the motor industry - and to generalise the lessons already learnt to other sectors of industry.

In all these disputes, the 2% local negotiations clause has provided the means to open up negotiations, but claims (and settlements) have gone far beyond that as workers have attempted to make up for years of wage restraint. The willingness of rank and file workers to organise themselves, overcome 'all-out' picketing restrictions, spread disputes to allied plants, short-cut involved negotiations and take immediate unofficial strike action has resulted in a series of small but very significant victories.

After Confexim

The recent victories at Confexim and Cladyknit have provided a badly-needed shot in the arm for those trade unionists who have been arguing that a militant and organised fightback is still possible (and necessary) despite a downturn in the general industrial struggle. The two disputes provide us with many lessons - and, more importantly, raise serious questions of where organisationally we go from here.

Perhaps the most important lessons is the most obvious one - if you want to win you've got to fight

hard. The Confexim women occupied for seven weeks and Cladyknit struck for eight.

Both sets of workers were well-organised, struck to their original demands and were prepared to seek outside help.

Outside support was vital in both disputes - crucial in the case of Confexim. Local collections amongst trade unionists were instituted early on in both disputes. Cladyknit received the active support of the local Derrybeg I.T.G.W.U. branch, Confexim

The

Unions

that of the Drogheda Trades Council. Decisive support in the case of Confexim came, however, from a more unusual source - a Dublin support group of rank and file trade unionists members of left groups, anarchists, feminists and individual socialists (SLP members were involved). This group, at a 70-strong meeting, persuaded the workers to switch their attack to the IDA who were ultimately responsible for the whole mess. The IDA offices were picketed and one week later the dispute was won when the women received the £7,000 in wages due to them.

It will be noted that (yet again) this support was organised unofficially - not by the trade unions. In the case of Confexim, the Tailors and Garment Workers Union refused to make the sit-in official and Sean Walsh, the full-time organiser, called upon them to throw in the towel only a week before they won. At least I.T.G.W.U. made the Cladyknit strike official, but no more. Desultory blacking, no mass pickets negotiations behind the

workers backs - the usual crack. Without the tenacity of the women and the support of the local branch, the dispute would never have been won.

It is no coincidence, of course, that both disputes have involved solely women workers, and mainly young. Some of the longest and bitterest disputes in the last few years have involved women fighting for basic rights e.g. recognition at Thoms Directories and jobs at Kilmartins. There is a common thread - industries with a large female workforce, low pay, lousy conditions and lack of union organisation boiling over (quite independently of the general level of struggle) into bitter and hard-fought disputes over basic rights. Each is important and each needs organised support (often more so than the major battles).

It would be foolish, however, to exaggerate the opportunities these disputes provide. Firstly, they are normally about minimal demands - the Confexim

workers were only interested in back-pay, not jobs; the Cladyknit workers returned with formal recognition only, wages and conditions having to wait. Secondly, by their very nature, they are isolated and spasmodic disputes - a 'breakthrough' in one job very rarely leading onto further struggles. (The fact that the Irish Times occasionally features them in a bunch is pretty irrelevant to us!). This presents tremendous problems of support organisation. The Dublin Confexim support group kept itself together for Cladyknit but was too late to intervene there. (A 40-strong support meeting had to be turned into a victory celebration with the simultaneous announcement of the ending of the strike.)

Suggestions were made at this meeting to 'keep the group together'. There is a degree of wishful thinking in this. Without a focus for continuing activity, the group can rapidly degenerate into a 'talking shop' for somewhat isolated and rootless militants. Such an arena

should not be seen as a SUBSTITUTE for the long and less glamorous, task of building organised rank and file groups in the unions, workplaces and across industries - groups rooted in the organised labour movement, committed to socialist policies. All this is not to deny the tremendous need for ad hoc support groups for all struggles like Confexim and Cladyknit in the present absence of an organised rank and file movement. They are necessary, and often successful. SLP trade unionists should make every effort to support such groups in an organised and concerted fashion - far more so than they have done up to now.

Reports on pages 6,7 and 8 compiled by,

Des.Derwin (ITGWU)
John Cane (ITGWU)
Frank Bambrick (AGEMOU)

the unions

Confexim workers picket the I.D.A.



WHERE IS ALL THE JOBS THE I.D.A. PROMISED. IF THERE ANYTHING LIKE BONTES THEY CAN KEEP THEM.

ELSEWHERE IN THIS issue we review the current state of disputes and victories in the Dublin motor industry and allied trades. It will be noticed that the vast majority of workers involved belong to one union - AGEMOU. This is no coincidence. Especially over the last few years, AGEMOU (mainly the Engineering Branch) has won itself a deserved reputation for militancy due to a refreshing lack of respect for 'due process' in negotiations. This militancy has paid dividends - particularly in attracting workers away from larger unions whose bureaucracies do everything 'by the book'.

Recently significant numbers of workers have been changing over to the union that 'gets results'. The major victim of this trend has been the largest and, possibly, most bureaucratic union in Ireland, I.T.G.W.U. Over the last two years, workers in three tractor and heavy engineering

the unions

pursuance of their claims, approached AGEMOU who made the strikes official and won settlements. Up to now I.T.G.W.U. has, with mutterings about 'poaching members' allowed the workers to go, partly on the basis that AGEMOU has a 'natural' interest

in the engineering/motors area and partly because the exodus of militant 'troublemakers' makes the bureaucratic rule of their empire that much easier. Now, however, it appears that AGEMOU may have gone too far and that I.T.G.W.U. is putting its foot down in Congress. The case concerned is seven clerical members at Irish Plastics and Packaging. This is not in the motor industry and the production workers in the factory (about 150) belong to No. 12 Branch, not No. 14. If the clerical workers (members of No. 2 Branch) succeed in joining AGEMOU, they may pull in the production workers behind them. This would be a dangerous precedent and word has come down from

the top floors of Liberty Hall to put a stop to it.

The clerical workers involved (six women and one man) have left for the usual reason - bad service. For example, they have been waiting three years for the union to gain a Labour Court recommended increase in pay over the introduction of a computer. For example, their claim for equal pay with IGB workers has been dropped by the union without trace due to a 'mistake in the preparation of the claim'. What tipped them into joining AGEMOU was the example of the victory of AGEMOU clerical workers next door in Fiat.

AGEMOU took them into membership ten weeks before and formulated a general pay claim. At this point the local I.T.G.W.U. was 'sympathetic' to their problems. Things quickly changed. Management refused to recognise AGEMOU. As a result official pickets

were placed by the seven workers. All other unions in the factory - I.T.G.W.U., AVEW, NEETU, and IGS - instructed their members to pass. Obviously, I.T.G.W.U. had put its foot down at Congress. Never a union to do anything by halves, I.T.G.W.U. also encouraged its members to do the work of the strikers (three I.T.G.W.U. workers took their cards in protest at this blatant anti-union activity).

STICK

The stick is being well and truly wielded. More amazing, though, is the carrot. After a secret meeting with IPP managing director McAuliffe (late of Gouldings), No. 2. Branch Secretary informed the strikers that he would personally guarantee them £14 a week increase and an official strike in seven(!) weeks if they wanted it.

Not surprisingly, the strikers have refused this tempting offer and some nine weeks later are still maintaining the picket of AGEMOU members. Unfortunately, the picket is having little effect on production. The workers inside the factory, under pressure from the ITGWU, have shown no signs of supporting the dispute and AGEMOU seem unable to step up the action. The inter-union dispute is scheduled to go before the ICTU shortly. A compromise return to work seems on the cards.

Perhaps AGEMOU have bitten off more than they can chew in this particular case. But the writing is on the wall for the ITGWU bureaucrats - unless democracy and militant action are rediscovered quickly, more and more members will be going the route of the Ferenka and motor industry workers. It's a lesson the ITGWU rank and file group, New Liberty, have been expounding for some time now.

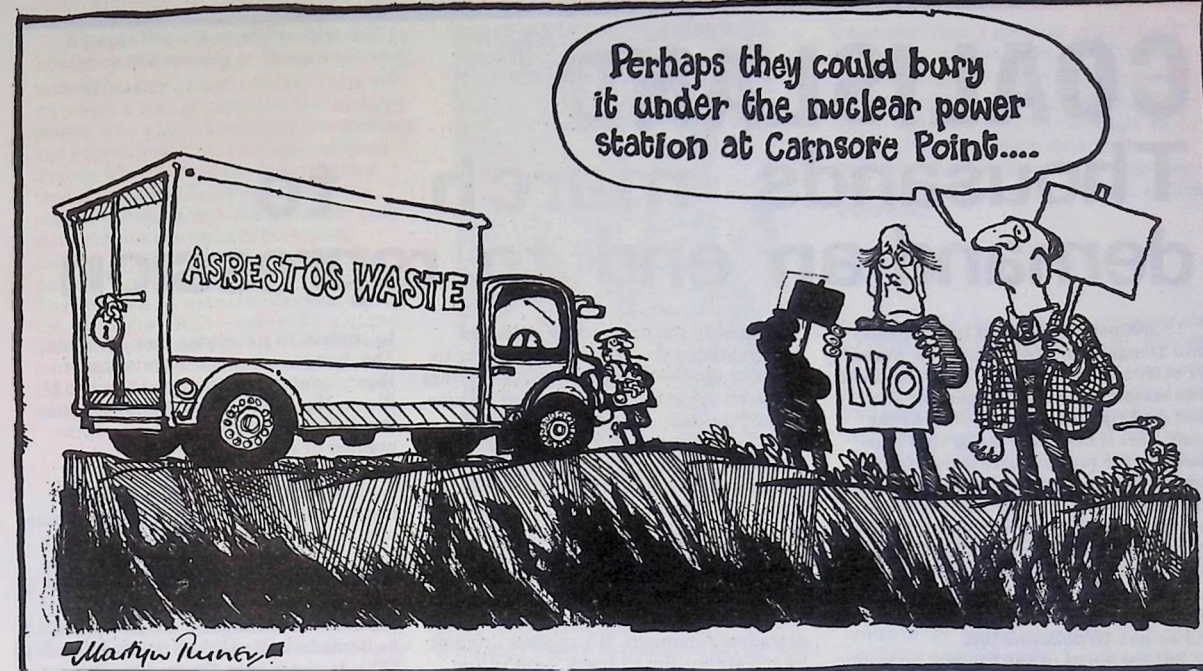
NATIONAL WAGE AGREEMENTS WHO WINS! read on....

FOR ALL those trade unionists who still believe that workers get "a pretty good increase" under centralised income policies like the National Wage Agreements, the following figures (published recently in a British rank and file paper) should prove enlightening.

As in Ireland, the British ruling class has been trying on various incomes policies since the last war - though in a less consistent fashion and under a variety of disguises (the latest being the notorious Social Contract). The figures prove beyond a doubt that real wages increased far less (and often actually dropped) when incomes policies were in force, than in those years when free collective bargaining was allowed.

The figures shown are the average annual rate of increase in real income (in percentage terms) after allowing for taxes and price increases.

Period	Incomes policy	% rise
1948-50	On	+1.2
1950-56	Off	+2.4
1956-58	On	-0.7
1958-61	Off	+3.0
1961-63	On	+1.4
1963-65	Off	+2.1
1965-69	On	+0.4
1969-72	Off	+4.2
1972-76	On	-1.8



What was the POINT?

THE CARNSORE POINT Anti-Nuclear Power Festival was a first in many ways. It was the first time in years that thousands of people gathered together in opposition to a government policy that directly affected their future environment. The speakers, musicians, the various leaflets hammered home the general dangers which a Nuclear Power Station would bring. The vast majority of those present felt that this surely was only a beginning. The beginning of a campaign that would challenge the half-truths, the propaganda the scare mongering of those in Government who push the advantages of a Nuclear Power Plant to preserve their future alliances with those who rule the roost in Irish industry. 'Flights' a powerful new rock group from London summed it up on a Sunday night as the Festival drew to a close. Thousands joined in chanting what surely must have been the Anthem of the Festival.....

"The Situation is under control"
"The Irish Government has the situation under control"
"There is No Situation"

CONTROL

The ironical part of the whole event was the fact that some of the speakers from the platform really expounded this point. It took a driving young rock band to express a prevailing idea among many who attended the Festival that it is not a matter of whether the situation is under control or not, but rather who is in control of the situation. Those who have direct legislative control over the setting up of a Nuclear Power Plant in Carnsore Point and will "make it safe" as they say cannot be trusted. The plans to build a Power

Plant in Carnsore is an insane scheme presented by the Government with no alternative offered except inevitable doom for Irish industry. It's a trick often used. If we didn't join the E.E.C. the economy would collapse. If we didn't have the Offences Against the State Act democracy would collapse. If we didn't have Wage Restraint foreign investment would dry up. Nuclear Power is presented with the minimum of resources put into alternative forms of energy. As Marxists we do not approve of Government plans, not because we are against industrial development and job creation and the advancement of new technology but because the simple fact is that nuclear power used in the interests of private industry is a highly dangerous gamble which we cannot allow the capitalist state to play.

INTERNATIONAL

The international anti-nuclear movement has produced an abundance of facts concerning the risks and expenditure involved in the building of a nuclear station at Carnsore. £800 million will be spent on a project which will employ no more than a couple of hundred people. The E.S.B. will be involved in a massive programme with plans for an emergency evacuation system in case of radiation leaks. No sage way has yet been found in any country for the disposal of nuclear waste, despite the millions of pounds spent on research. Because of this and because of the various European Governments quick profit motivated solutions huge struggles have already taken place throughout Europe with varying success by the Anti-Nuclear Movement. Sweden's last government for instance was elected

to power on the promise not to build nuclear reactors which were in the pipeline. France has seen massive riots on the streets in which a number of protesters opposed to Nuclear Power have been shot by police. Now it is the Irish Government turn faced with continuing international pressure from the multinational Nuclear construction companies to introduce nuclear power amidst a wave of media propaganda to bolster its argument. What it means to the working class is a curbing of trade union rights as the daily strip searches and the banning of the right to strike by French nuclear workers has shown. In this context nuclear power becomes a political issue which can only be fought by involving the Trade Union Movement which is divided into the "jobs at all cost brigade" and those seriously interested in the dangers involved in the Carnsore project. The latter moralising about the dangers involved in nuclear power without attempting to introduce the issue to the general membership of their respective unions means in the long term a great deal of speechifying but little made. Carnsore Point was a beginning but its success was limited in so far as no positive plan emerged to involve the muscle which the Trade Union Movement could use to oppose the building of a Nuclear Power Plant at Carnsore Point. Many at the Point did not see it this way, but the fact is that no real fight can be maintained without direct involvement from the LABOUR MOVEMENT.

DAVID BYRNE

COALISLAND

Thousands march to demand an end to repression

15,000 people marched triumphantly into Dungannon town centre on August 27 after a six mile march from Coalisland. The march was a commemoration of the first civil rights march in 1968. At the same time it marked a major step in rebuilding the political movement against British Imperialism. The march reflected the growing rejection of the British government's intensified policy of repression by police interrogation torture, Diplock Courts and H Block. The demands of the march were for an end to British rule, repatriation of prisoners in English jails, and an end to police torture.

But the focus of the day was on political status. The march was led by 200 men and women clad only in the symbolic grey blankets representing the present 'Blanket' protest by 340 men in H Block. The remarkable thing about the march was the number of areas of the North that were represented and the number of new Relative Action Committees that were on the march.

The Belfast RACs have been active for over two years now. But in the last few months, regional RACs have been organising in many country areas that have not seen political activity since the heyday of mass politics during the civil rights struggle.

PROTEST

The fight for political status has escalated recently with new protests by prisoners on the blanket in H Block. Kieran Nugent who started the blanket protest will soon mark his second anniversary on the blankets. He was the first prisoner to be convicted under the British government's criminalisation policy - which is an attempt to deny the political struggle that has been raging in the North for ten years now.

By calling the republican and socialist prisoners 'criminals' the British hoped to isolate them from their support in the community. The prisoners' reaction to this policy has been quite clear. As Kieran Nugent put it: "The only way the authorities would get the criminal uniform on me would be to nail it to my back."

Instead he and over 300 others have worn only blankets and endured atrocious conditions in the H Blocks. They spend 24 hours a day in their cells in virtual solitary confinement. They have no books or newspapers and only recently were they allowed to receive some mail. They get welfare visits only if they put on a prison uniform.

Recently the prisoners themselves have escalated the protests by refusing to slop out their cells because of the beatings and arbitrary punishments which became part of the daily routine of H Block. This 'no wash' protest has increased the publicity and the support for the men in H Block. It has, as well brought, increased harassment and beatings from the screws.

In August the punishment by the screws was extended to visitors as well. Prisoners have long been subject to strip searches. Now visitors to Long Kesh and Crumlin Road are put through this degrading treatment. It's another attempt by the authorities to break support for the prisoners.



The 200 protesters in blankets lead the march across County Tyrone

But as the prisoners stepped up their protests, so support for them has grown. For the British policy of criminalisation has not been accepted. Local men and women who are sent to H Block or Armagh are not regarded as criminal or terrorists as the government and the media call them.

The fight for political status is not simply a humanitarian issue. It is part of the fight against the rule of British imperialism. It is part of the British machinery of repression. The H Blocks are only the end of a long cruel road. It begins with soldiers on the streets who harass and arrest anyone at will. They are brought to Castlemagh where the RUC torture them

to 'confess' to something they didn't do. The non-jury Diplock Courts accept these 'confessions' and send them to H Block. Meanwhile, Mason tries to claim the British are winning because of the number of convictions they obtain through torture.

Ten years ago the first civil rights march took the same route as the present one. But that was the only similarity. In 1968, 2,500 people came out to demand an end to unionists discrimination. In 1978 six times as many people marched for political status and an end to British rule. As Bernadette McAliskey pointed out: "The demands have changed because we

have learned in a decade of struggle that the real root of our problems always lay in the existence of British rule in this part of Ireland". Those who led the 1968 march did not come to this one. Austin Currie and Gerry Fitt denounced the march, further exposing the bankruptcy of SDLP politics.

Those who came on this march could not help but notice a feeling of enthusiasm and confidence in the marchers. People were not on a memory trip. No one was interested in singing "WE SHALL OVERCOME" as they did ten years ago. People were interested in using this march to build a movement that could finally win political status.

Because this march was so large and so confident, the meeting in Dungannon was understandably an anti-climax. There was no political lead given to the few hundred people who stayed behind for the speeches and people jeered the first speaker from Tyrone who claimed the marchers had trod six weary miles for "humanitarian reasons". Inexplicable for an overtly political occasion, Bernadette McAliskey and the Tyrone RAC attempted to keep political organisations off the platform. They refused to state the organisations of the Sinn Féin IRSP speakers. As well the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression was not allowed a speaker despite having played a prominent role in organisational worker's action against repression.

SOCIALIST

In fact, there was no socialist or working class representatives on the platform. As one observer put it:

"It was extremely naive of the Tyrone RAC to think that you could go back ten years and have a platform that didn't represent political organisations. It is ridiculous to think that you could hide republican speakers and it was undemocratic to keep TUCAR and socialist speakers off the platform."

As a result of the Tyrone RAC domination of the organising, there was a conservative platform with little discussion of 'where we go from here'. Therefore, the opportunity of using the march to promote discussion of what ten years of struggle has meant and what those 15,000 people could do next to fight British imperialism, was ignored.



Bernadette McAliskey and Brendan Gallagher. Photo: Derek Speirs.

We have such opportunities coming up again. Unfortunately, Provisional Sinn Féin have claimed the Derrv commemoration on October 7th as "theirs". Provisional Sinn Féin will therefore decide what the demand of the march are and who is going to speak.

It has been many years since so many marched in the North. Never have so many supported political status and joined RACs. The need to build on that support and not cut it back only to those who uncritically support the war of national liberation, is urgent.

As well it is not enough to plan to march again for another ten years. We must use the marches this time to build a

movement that is going to attack every facet of imperialist rule in this country. We must organise the strength that counts - the strength of working class organisation to fight that rule. We can begin to do so only by having open democratic meetings which include all the organisations who are involved in the fight against repression;

SOUTH

That fight against repression must also be taken up in the South as well. It is vital for members of the SLP to become actively involved in the fight for political status and against all repression. Though a small SLP contingent was organised for the Coalisland march, the SLP presence in the anti-imperialist movement is negligible. The SLP has one of the best written statements on the national question. The problem is that it is just on paper. Nobody is going to be impressed with SLP attitudes if it is not actively involved in that struggle. Because of its size and representation in the working class, the SLP could mobilise support in the South for the men in H Block. It could become more active in TUCAR. SLP trade unionists could begin raising the issue of repression in their unions in a co-ordinated way. We are only going to win people to the socialist answer to the National Question if we can actively lead the fight against the rule of British imperialism in Ireland.

By JOAN KELLY

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LIST D

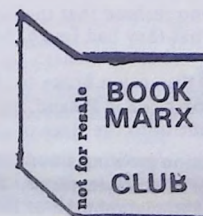
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A strange kind of socialism

By John Goodwillie

TEN YEARS AGO - on 20th August 1968 - the Russian tanks started rolling into Czechoslovakia, and heralded the end of the 'Prague Spring' scrutinised throughout the world for evidence that it was possible to put a 'human face' on the 'socialism of Eastern Europe'. The reverberations of the Russian invasion are still seen in the Communist Parties of the West. Most of them condemned - for the first time - an action of the 'socialist fatherland'. And a few have continued their criticism of breaches of human rights.

The Czechoslovak events had their origin in changed economic circumstances. Czechoslovakia had emerged from the War as the most advanced industrial country in Eastern Europe. It lived by exporting its goods. But now, its markets were producing their own manufactured goods - or importing them from the West. With its markets in decline, the national income had actually fallen in 1963.

A reform plan was drawn up to make the economy more competitive. Backward sections of the economy were to be wound up and their workers redeployed. Investment was to be concentrated on areas of high productivity. Financial incentives were to be given to managers and skilled workers.

The plan did not work. The reformers blamed the entrenched bureaucracy protected by the Communist Party leader, Novotny. The reforming section of the Party leadership allied themselves with personal enemies of Novotny and with the bureaucrats of Slovakia, the most backward part of the country, who were tired of Czech domination.

Novotny tried to appeal to petty bureaucrats whose jobs were threatened, and to the workers who were facing pay cuts or job losses. The reformers in their turn looked towards the intellectuals and students, already in dispute with Novotny, and promised to protect those who attacked Novotny's ideas and supporters in the press.

So Dubcek came to power. He had no record of liberalism. Once in office, he spent a lot of time appealing for 'responsibility' and positing 'manifestations of anarchy'. But he still had to root out Novotny's supporters from their positions of influence in the country. The Action Programme adopted by the Party in April 1968 stated: 'The party cannot impose its authority: this has to be won again and again by party activity. It cannot enforce its line by means of directives but by the work of its members, by the truthfulness of its ideals'.

In this atmosphere, censorship of the press collapsed. Ministers were grilled on television. Meetings were held outside Party control. New organisations were set up. Functionaries were forced to resign.

For the most part, this battle was initially confined to bureaucrats and intellectuals. But then it began to spread to the workers. Meetings in factories began to formulate their own demands, in particular wage demands. In some factories there were strikes over wages or conditions.

A democratisation of the trade unions commenced, under pressure from below. 70,000 workers in Prague threatened to strike unless the trade union chief, Polacek, was removed. Over a year, about half the trade union bureaucrats were removed. Individual unions gained more independence from the trade union congress, RTUM. The metal workers' union demanded the right of workers' councils to appoint factory managers,

enterprise directors and the economics minister. The central committee of the party was informed in April that 'the slogan "Trade Unions without Communists" begins to assert itself in some places. Four shop committees which have already emerged in the Aero plant are completely without Communists'. A number of 'Workers' Committees for the Defence of Freedom of the Press' were formed, involving thousands of workers by the end of June.

The workers' councils as they emerged were dominated by engineers and technicians. They did not exercise real power and only showed the potential that workers could exercise. The potential was cut short by the Russian invasion.

The course of events after the Russian invasion was one of gradual compromises, gradual reversal of the liberalisation and gradual removal of the reformers. But initially, the Czechoslovak people and especially the workers showed and heroic passive resistance.

The planned congress of the Communist Party met secretly in a Prague factory and no-one betrayed it to the Russians. Press, radio and television denounced the invasion openly. Hundreds of thousands of workers participated in mass demonstration in November, January and March. 40,000 Skoda workers called Dubcek's agreement with the Russians 'a shameful capitulation'. Up to 800,000 people gathered to support the protest of Jan Palach who burned himself to death in January 1969.

The Czechoslovak workers were looking for a lead. But neither wing of the Communist Party could give them that lead without consigning itself to oblivion. Had even a guerrilla campaign been mounted against the Russians - as was advocated by General Priblik, who was sacked for his pains - disturbances might have spread to other countries in Eastern Europe. Could the Russian army have easily dealt with two, three or many Czechoslovakias?

For Czechoslovakia is not an isolated case. There have been other outbreaks of rebellion against the repressive regimes of Eastern Europe.

In '53 in East Berlin 10,000 building workers fought against increased work norms and for free elections. This started a general strike in most cities in East Germany. 300,000 workers participated forcing the entrance of Russian troops to bring the demonstrations to a halt. The workers fought back, but without arms they had no chance. Some were killed. 1,300 were put on trial. The Government blamed Western agents and fascists elements. Yet of the members of the SED (Communist Party) who were purged for supporting the rising, one-third had been Communist Party members before 1933 - i.e. they were old communists who realised that the 'socialism' that they had now was not what they had fought for.

After Khrushchev's denunciations of Stalinism the seeds of dissension broke to the surface. Massive demonstrations took place in Poland, but more significantly Hungarian workers came onto the stage of class struggle. There was also dissatisfaction growing among intellectuals. Discussion began to spill over into the factories. 200,000 people participated in a ceremonial reburial of Laszlo Kajak, an influential Communist who had been executed under Stalin as a 'fascist spy'. A



Ten years ago - on 20th. August 1968 - Russian tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia, and ended the 'Prague Spring'. They met with heroic passive resistance.

demonstration was called 'in solidarity with our Polish brothers'. Despite being banned at the last moment, 100,000 people participated. They demanded the return to power of Imre Nagy, a former Prime Minister who had been sacked for liberalising policies. 'Out with the Russians' and 'Free and secret elections' were also demanded. The Party leader Gero broadcast an attack on the demonstration. While some demonstrators went to tear down an immense statue of Stalin, others went to the radio station. A security policeman fired a shot at them. The demonstrators fought back and the fighting spread through Budapest. Soldiers gave guns to the crowds. Barricades went up. Russian tanks moved in, while Nagy was appointed as Prime Minister. But the insurgents were not to be bought off, with the Russians still on the streets. A general strike spread through Hungary. Workers' councils were set up in the factories. Delegates from factories formed 'Revolutionary Councils' in towns and working-class districts. A 'transnational Council' covered over a third of the country. As the Government apparatus was paralysed, these councils took over essential services.

Nagy obtained the withdrawal of Russian troops from Budapest and legalised parties other than the Communist Party. Then he proclaimed Hungarian neutrality. Russian troops moved back in. Nagy's government collapsed but the workers fought back. 20,000 people were killed in Budapest. The general strike had resumed. A Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council was formed. The puppet government under Kadar had to negotiate with it. Russian troops prevented the creation of a National Workers' Council. When Russian troops arrested the members of the Budapest Council, a new general strike took place. But general strikes cannot continue for ever, and gradually workers were obliged to go back to work and the workers' councils went under.

In December 1970, in Poland, the government put up food prices by 20%. Workers in Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot marched in protest. Street fighting broke out. Workers in Szczecin came out in sympathy and obtained guns to return police fire. The strike wave spread to other cities. The government announced that prices would not increase again for two years. Gomulka was replaced by Gierke. Strikes continued into 1971. Shipyard workers in Szczecin occupied their workplace and elected a workers' committee. Gierke himself had to come down and plead with them.

What sort of 'workers' states' are the countries of Eastern Europe that, decades after the establishment of 'socialism', the workers are still inclined to revolt? These countries are obviously not governed by the working class. They are obviously not governed in the interest of the working class. Instead, a bureaucracy composed of the most important officials, managers and Communist Party leaders forms a new ruling class. The economic system is a type of state capitalism. Just as in Ireland, the chairman of C.I.E. is effectively a member of the ruling class though he doesn't own a share in C.I.E. or maybe in anything else, so in Eastern Europe the bureaucrats control the whole of industry though individually they own nothing but a country house and a big car.

EXPLOITATION

And just as a fertiliser factory worker in Ireland doesn't have to work in Gouldings and be exploited by Tony O'Reilly - he can instead work in Nitrigin Eireann and be exploited by the state - so in Eastern Europe the workers are exploited, and, as economic problems assail their masters, they will continue to rebel. There are more recent examples of workers' action:

*1973: Further strikes in Szczecin.

*June 1976: strikes in Poland against renewed price increases. Workers in the Ursus factory sit down on the railway line.

*January/February 1977: Workers in many Czech factories refuse to denounce the dissident 'Charter 77' unless the text is read out to them.

*August 1977: 90,000 miners on strike in the Jiu valley, Romania.

Over all this hangs the shadow of the Russian army. But there have been strikes and demonstrations in the Soviet Union too. And there have been instances, both in Russia and elsewhere, of Russian troops refusing to fire against workers. The splits in the bureaucracies which provided the opportunity for workers' action in Eastern Europe will occur again. The insolubility of their economic problems dictates this. And the ferment that is Eastern Europe will erupt, perhaps on an international scale.

IN THE FIRST WEEKS of July, 25 civilian prisoners in the Military Detention Centre at the Curragh were ordered to carry out general painting work in the prison. The prisoners' response was to reactivate the Prisoners' Union and subsequently they agreed not to comply with the directive on the grounds that it forced them to engage in scab labour, thus taking jobs at a time of high unemployment from the skilled, union personnel who previously carried out such work.

For their trouble, the prisoners were sentenced by the authorities to 14 days loss of remission and were deprived of the 'privileges' of letters and visits for a month a procedure, the prisoners believe, which will recur indefinitely.

This latest incident brought to a head a long series of protests and recriminations at the Curragh. Originally intended as a two year, short term expedient to house 'high risk' political prisoners following the rioting in Mountjoy in 1972, it turned out, like all such measures, to be neither short term or a detention centre for political prisoners. Instead, the Department of Defence has consistently knuckled under pressure for the Department of Justice with the result that the Curragh now functions as a kind of adult Loughan House placing in quarantine problem prisoners such as those with psychiatric disorders, sex offenders and, of course, the biggest problem of all in the Department of Justice eyes, activists in the Prisoners Rights Organisation.

It goes without saying that it is grossly unsuitable for prisoners with psychiatric problems. Due to the regimental set-up and the amount of drugs being administered (over 58% require drugs regularly), it has taken on the character of something of a leucokoo's nest. That it is also unsuitable for ordinary prisoners is clear from the fact that besides doing away with remand and parole facilities, it also fails to provide the mandatory six hours minimum daily work for civilian offenders.

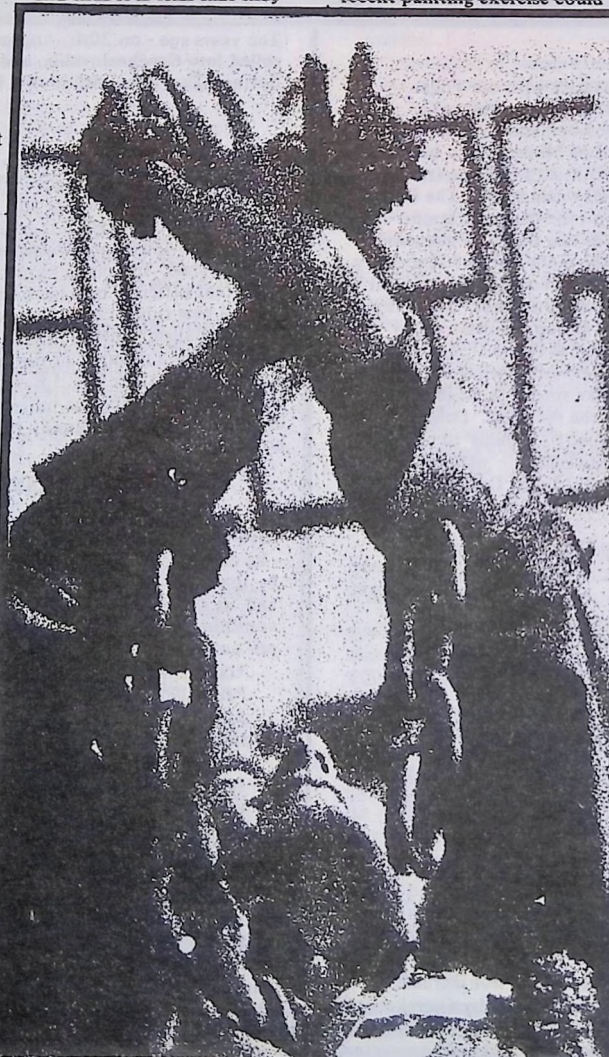
This is evidently a legacy of its original status as a political prison, since political prisoners are not required to take part in prison labour.

Inside the CURRAGH

By F. BURNS

However, civilian prisoners are usually direct victims of poverty and overemployment, and thus it is vital that they

receive adequate vocational training if they are to avoid relapsing into crime. The recent painting exercise could



be interpreted as a step in this direction, but using blackleg labour, and equipping prisoners with skills which are not recognised outside prison, is hardly a promising start. More likely, it is simply typical inept cover-up job to offset criticism from the Prisoners Rights Organisation on this issue.

Ironically, though the prisoners are to be commended for their refusal to act as scabs, it remains to be seen whether the unions will show a reciprocal interest in the welfare of prisoners. The painters who are members of U.C.A.T. can hardly stand on the sidelines while the Government violates their right to work, but even at a more general level there is still a lot to be done. Recently prisoners in Mountjoy have had recourse to the I.T.G.W.U. and P.O.W.U. about appalling Dickensian conditions in the workshops in the prison.

These developments present ideal opportunities for the unions to make up for their poor record on prison affairs in the past.

Given this situation, it is not surprising that the civilian prisoners in the Curragh have insisted that they are not political prisoners and hence should not be kept in military custody - a complaint incidentally which has found unexpected support from the Prison Visiting Committee. But the interesting feature of this demand is that it comes precisely at a time when political prisoners ARE fighting for political status, and as such both demands perfectly complement one another.

The current campaign conducted by the Curragh prisoners, and the Prisoners' Rights Organisation on their behalf, certainly represents a positive moving away from the platitudinous 'all prisoners are political' slogan which has found favour in certain quarters, most notably in the pages of the UNITED IRISHMAN and in bodies such as the Irish Association of Democratic Lawyers. It is up to all trade union activists, particularly those who belong to unions with power to intervene directly into the prison spectrum, to put an end to this ludicrous situation where political prisoners are treated as civilian offenders, and civilian prisoners are housed in political prisons.

Letters

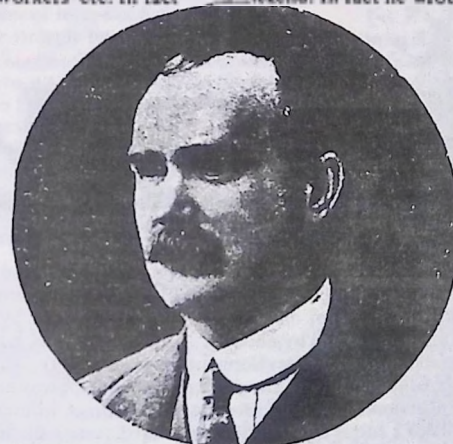
CONNOLLY Again

A Chara,
The main objections to the armed national liberation struggle centre on the six county Protestants. From those who pose as enlightened liberals, such as Conor Cruise O'Brien, to the "Republican Congress" tradition on the left, it is argued that Orange resistance to Irish Independence makes it a crime to take up arms to drive the British out of Ireland. In this connection the authority of James Connolly has been invoked as supporting the policy summed up in the Belfast wall and poster slogans "Workers Kill Sectarianism", "Sectarianism Kills Workers" etc. In fact

out evidence) in an Irish Times article on Republicanism and Socialism. Connolly's reason being given as his certainty that armed struggle would lead to "sectarianism".

In Socialist Workers Review June, 1978, Brian Trench writes of Connolly's admonition that "not a shot" was to be fired in Ulster. Presumably this accounts for Trench's belief that "Connolly was himself ambiguous and uncertain on this question".

In fact Connolly was not only clear and certain on the question but repeatedly in his actual writings he categorically took the opposite position from the "not a shot" legend. In fact he wrote about



Connolly's sympathies would have been far more with the person who changed one such wall-slogan to read "Sectarianism Kills Catholics". If this strikes your readers as outrageous, it is an indication of how far the distortion of the real James Connolly has gone.

For instance George Gilmore in a letter to the Irish Times asserted that Connolly gave an order that "not a shot was to be fired in Ulster". No evidence was given for this assertion. But it was repeated by Noel Browne equally with-

the Home Rule Party's proposed acceptance of partition:

"And lo and behold, the trusted guardians of the people, the vaunted saviours of the Irish race, agree in front of the enemy and in face of the world to sacrifice to the bigoted enemy the unity of the nation and along with it the lives, liberties and hopes of that portion of the nation which in the midst of the most hostile surroundings have fought to keep the faith in things national and progressive

"To it ("the betrayal of the national democracy of industrial Ulster") labour should give the bitterest opposition, against it Labour in Ulster should fight even to the death, if necessary, as our fathers fought before us" (Irish Worker, 14th March, 1914. Our italics)

"It is felt that the proposal to leave the Home Rule minority at the mercy of an

ignorant majority with the evil record of the Orange party is a proposal that should never have been made, and that the establishment of such a scheme should be resisted with armed force if necessary.

Personally I entirely agree with those who think so: Belfast is bad enough as it is; what it would be like under such rule the wildest imagination cannot conceive!"

Is mise,

James Daly
P.R.O. for I.R.S.P.
34 Upper Gardiner Street
Dublin 1

RANK & FILE

Dear Comrades,
SWR STATES IN ITS aims that it will 'argue for the building of a rank and file movement in the unions to fight for union democracy and militant policies'. Fine. So, after three issues, where the hell is the argument? Reporting industrial disputes, admittedly from a rank and file perspective, is only a small part of the answer. Far more important, at this stage, is the development of a serious theory of building a rank and file movement in the Irish labour movement. So far, SWR has not begun to even attempt this.

Perhaps you feel that the formal commitment of the SLP (thru conference resolutions largely initiated by SWR supporters) to a rank and file perspective, means the argument has been won - at least in the party, if not in the class. Nothing could be further from the truth. These are purely 'paper' commitments. The left reformist wing of the party (grouped around the current leadership) is more than happy to keep it that way. The revolutionary wing is confused and divided over how to translate the demands into concrete action, whilst many party members (including some trade union militants) lack any conception of what a rank and file movement looks like, never mind is capable of achieving.

Surely SWR is uniquely placed to tackle this problem? The ex-SWM comrades involved in the paper have SOME experience on the ground and have built up SOME kinda theory over the years. The

experience and ideas should now be shared with the rest of the party. Not - I hasten to add - in the style of bringing down the tablets, but by way of an exploration of recent successes and failures on the ground. Looking at a wide variety of the problems concerned e.g. why did the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee collapse? What attitude do we take to left officials in the unions? How exactly do we organise Joint Shop Steward Committees? What way do we unite employed and unemployed? All basic, but, in my opinion, very necessary questions.

The systematic exploration of these, and many other problems, will (hopefully) lead to a coherent, but flexible, theory of how to develop the rank and file movement. A theory which could unite the revolutionary wing of SLP against the inevitable attacks of the left reformists and also equip our trade union militants with a practical program for action to take out into the unions and onto the shop floor - where the ultimate test will be. Finally, if such a series of articles is taken up by SWR, I hope that, wherever possible, they will be written by people with direct experience of the questions involved - and that debate on the problems be opened up to those with dissenting views. (This presumably goes without saying!)

Fraternally,

JOHN CANE

SOCIALISM And FEMINISM



This is a follow up to an article which appeared in SWR No. 3, Liberation and Equality by Joan Kelly. Further contributions are welcome.

IN PRIMITIVE society women were neither oppressed nor exploited. According to Marxist anthropologist Evelyn Reed, "In primitive society, founded upon a collectivist mode of production, women excelled as productive and cultural leaders. Women occupied an exceedingly high position in tribal affairs; there was no curtailment by men of either their intellectual capacities or their sexual freedom... a woman did not need a husband as a means of support; she was herself economically independent as a producing member of the community." This happy position for women went into decline with the development of patriarchal class society, and the establishment of monogamous marriage.

Engels, in his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* describes how in the transition from a hunting and food-gathering economy to a higher mode of production based on agriculture, stock-raising and village crafts the primitive division of labour between the sexes was replaced by a more complex social division of labour. This greater efficiency of labour gave rise to a sizeable surplus product which was gradually appropriated by a hierarchy of men as their private property. The institution of marriage and the family was then required to regulate and uphold the unequal distribution of goods. The family also served to perpetuate this unequal

based on a social division of labour based on sex. The family is founded on the unpaid labour of women in the home.

When it suited capitalist interests, however, women were employed outside the home. Employers wanted women and children because they could get away with paying them less, and so from the very beginning of the Industrial Revolution women made up a sizeable portion of the labour force. This superexploitation of women was consciously used by the employers to destroy the male monopoly in previously skilled trades and to drive down wage levels. In Capital Marx points out that the cheapening of labour power was achieved by "sheer abuse of the labour of women and children, by sheer robbery of every normal condition requisite for working and



living, and by the sheer brutality of over-work and night-work."

Thus women have been condemned to their oppressed status by the same social forces and relations which have brought about the oppression of one class by another, one race by another and one nation by another. It is the capitalist system, the ultimate stage in the development of class society, which is the fundamental source of the degradation and oppression of women. The family and the secondary position of women are the results of a social organisation structured to suit the interests of a small number of elite men.

Separatist feminists see men as the enemy and eschew a political explanation, and they are right in that individual men are often the enemies of individual women, and working class men are no less guilty than bourgeois men. This enmity between the sexes is the result, however, of a sexist culture, which in turn is the result of the capitalist superstructure. Our society is structured by capitalist interests along often very subtle and complex lines, and that is why only a radical change will allow women to be liberated. Feminists must be socialists because reform alone cannot produce the requisite transformations.

A distinction can be made between exploitation and oppression. Women as members of the labour force suffer severe economic exploitation. Working-class women have always been a particularly exploited group. They have been exploited as workers, and they have been exploited as female

workers, in their pay, conditions, choice and nature of employment, and in that they usually retain full responsibility for the housework even when holding a full-time job. Women are now becoming active in the trade unions and a working-class women's movement has begun to emerge.

Women's oppression is the condition brought about by tradition, convention and conditioning which all combine to designate for women a lower place in society—an inferior role. This oppression is usually complex and often subtle and its effects include women's exploitation in the workplace; their

all but the most obtuse and bigoted could see that any rights won for women in general would benefit working-class women, and the proletarian movement as well."

Because of the oppressive nature of capitalist culture all women will gain from a radical socialist change, although the women of the propertied classes may also lose some privileges and may consequently be less prepared to fight for change. It is a fact however that only in a radically different society can all women achieve total self-determination.

Like the suffragist movement the struggle of feminists now



exploitation and isolation in the home; the devaluation, in real terms, of motherhood with the control of women's bodies being in the hands of male social, medical, commercial and religious interests; discrimination against women in education; their chattel position in law; their exploitation by consumer business interests which maintain that women are the "fair sex" and then prey on their inability to live up to a totally limited and plastic definition of "fairness"; the divide between women and men which permits rape, wife-battering and other examples of inter-sex hatred and rivalry.

The struggle by women against oppression is not a new one. In the nineteenth century women of the privileged classes began to see the hypocrisy of the refusal of the men of their class to extend to them the rights proclaimed by the bourgeois democratic revolution.

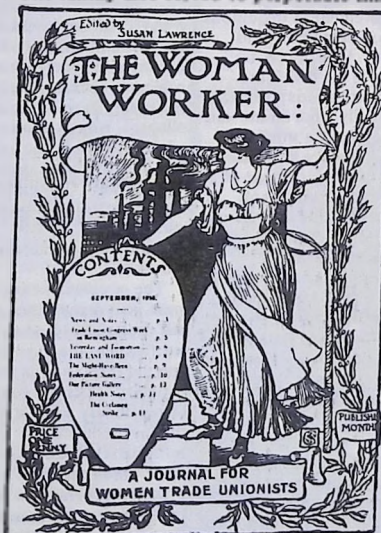
The suffragist movement may have been composed of the upper-middle and ruling classes, but as Mary-Alice Waters of the Socialist Workers' Party in the United States argues, "The early struggle for equal rights with men, in which women of property played a leading role, was thoroughly progressive..."

is a progressive movement, as it seeks to undermine the superstructure of capitalist society. This does not mean we should support reformist feminism which seeks merely to improve women's lot without greatly altering women's role.

But the initiatives taken up by women's groups such as the attempts to reach women in the homes and in the communities; to take up issues such as prices, unemployment among married women, health facilities, family planning clinics, nurseries, and tenant associations; to end educational and legal discrimination; to combat sexism and exploitation in the media; as well as action on the shop floor and in the unions must be supported.

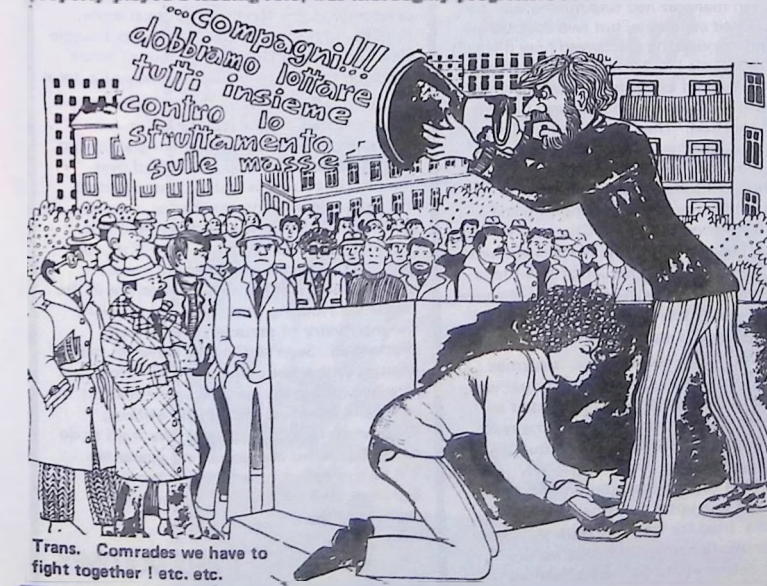
Revolutionary feminism is the route by which women will support the socialist revolution and socialism without feminism will fail because it is impossible for the working class to carry through the social revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society unless masses of women are mobilised to play a conscious and leading role.

By MARY GORDON



division from one generation to the next, and to ensure that the woman's offspring was also the man's he had to have exclusive possession of the wife. Thus the woman became part of her husband's property, obliged to place at his disposal her body and brain, her uterus and domestic services.

Initially marriage was restricted to the propertied classes, where it had its *raison d'être*, but gradually it was extended to the working people. This allowed for the placing of total responsibility for the care of the young on the parents and it meant that the least possible portion of society's accumulated wealth had to be tapped in order to ensure reproduction of the labouring classes. One of the reasons why the family system is the cheapest possible means of reproduction is that it is



Trans. Comrades we have to fight together! etc. etc.

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- THE BRITISH ARMY AND LINKS WITH SOUTHERN AFRICAN MERCENARIES
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What a difference in 10 years

SEAN MCCARTNEY IS an exception to the rule. To all the rules in fact. He was born and reared in Belfast's toughest district a square mile mixture of once elegant but now faded Georgian town houses and mean two-up two-down Victorian terraces that is known as the Markets. The vegetable and fruit warehouses that gave the area its name have now moved to a modern and more hygienic site near the Belfast-Dublin motorway but the district's fierce reputation for tough, at times violent, individuality remains. JOBs were always scarce in the Markets, more so through a notorious loyalist area, has made people reluctant to carry on their former trade. Petty crime, a useful supplement to casual labouring in the past, now ranks next to the 'brood' as a major source of income. The area's housing is generally the city's worst and the newly started redevelopment scheme has for many come too late to stop the rot. Its sort of place sociologists would call 'a deprived inner city blackspot' but given its position wedged between the city's malodorous gasworks, the polluted Lagan and a hostile loyalist area the disinterested terminology of academics seems a somewhat inadequate description of life in the Markets.

Sean McCartney is an exception in that he escaped the fate of most kids in the area: the dole, the street corner, the faded glamour of the local pool-room should have been his lot. Many of his contemporaries drifted into the Provos or the Officials and like Sean's best friend to whom he sends regular supplies of books, now waste away in Long Kesh. He was also lucky that his adolescence coincided with that of the Welfare State. Free health, free education and social security gave Sean the chances that the Unionist state had staunchly refused his parents. He was good at school and passed the 11+, went to Grammar school and then on to Queen's University where, at the early age of twenty one, he graduated last year with a Second Class Honours degree in Business Studies and Politics.

But then his run of luck ended. Normality, Markets-style, re-asserted itself. After graduating he got a job as a plumbers helper to bid him over the summer but a year later he's still mending burst pipes. With those twelve months despair has replaced hopeful expectation as over thirty employers have rejected him. All the jobs were looking for someone with his sort of qualifications yet only twice did he come even near success. His first attempt set the depressing pattern for the next year. The post was a trainee, personnel manager in one of the city centre stores; an interesting job with a good salary and prospects for middle if not senior management. Just what he was looking for in fact. A bridge between his working class origins and a middle class future, a way out of the Markets and a chance to give his newly married wife a good start to family life. He was optimistic of his chances, the Branch manager had told him he was the best qualified candidate, but two days before the final interview he discovered how difficult it was for people like him to leave the Markets. At 5 a.m. a squad of British soldiers burst into his mother's tiny house and dragged him off for interrogation. They were after information about his mates they said, and although they reckoned he was too intelligent to accept the usual bribe of money and an air ticket to London or Birmingham they knew he had applied for a good job in the City centre. Then the threats began. Didn't he realise he'd need security clearance from the Army and that a word in the right place could ruin his chances? His work would involve handling money and was his prospective employer aware of his background? Sean resisted their blackmail attempts; the uneasy life of an informer was not for him. But the Army was as good as their threat. At his interview the same reservations were expressed and a lesser qualified candidate got the job.

Since then further disappointments have been heaped one upon the other. He's unsuccessfully tried for teaching jobs, business and administrative posts and even ironically a research job with the Fair Employment

Agency. His bitter experience has not been sweetened by the knowledge that his fellow graduates have all got work. Sean is in no doubt as to why. "To be born with a name like mine labels you straight away in this city and an address in the Markets makes it worse. To be a Catholic is bad enough but a working class Catholic is a no-hoper." He refuses to change either. "I could call myself John and numerous people have offered me their address to use but why should I pretend to be something I'm not? I know what's happening. Even a Protestant I work with turned to me one day and said "It's terrible. YOU shouldn't be a plumber's mate, you're being discriminated against." It's more subtle these days and I can't see bodies like the F.E.A. changing it."

Its almost ten years to the day since Austin Currie, then a fresh, campaigning newcomer to the Northern political scene, fired the first shot in the Civil Rights struggle by squatting in a Dungannon council house allocated to the unmarried secretary of a local unionist politician. With Currie's dramatic gesture Catholic frustration at fifty years of unemployment, emigration and discrimination boiled up and spilled over. The rest, of course, is history; the reluctant and tardy concessions, the Provos, the fall of Stormont and British imposed reforms.

Now Catholics can go to the F.E.A. to complain against discrimination; local council powers of house allocation are in the hands of the Housing Executive and officially the machinery of sectarianism has been dismantled. Sean McCartney views all these changes with some cynicism. "My father was interned during the war and spent the rest of his life either on the dole or working for peanuts in Inglis' bakery. I've tried to do better but failed and there's no guarantee it'll be any better for my newly born son." For Sean, and the Markets, not much has changed in the last ten years.

By ED. MOLONEY

ADVICE... OR ACTION!

DEPENDING ON WHAT PART OF the country you are from, your political vocabulary may include one of two medical terms- the clinic or the surgery. Both terms referred to the same type of arrangements where electors troop in with their problems to a 'Mr. Fixit' T.D. who promises to do something about it. The problems could range from doing something about getting a job in the civil service to the more desperate cases of people looking for a short cut through the bureaucracy in order to guarantee their rights to a medical card or a house.

Organising a clinic has been the traditional means of building or sustaining a political base. In return for proving their ability to get things done the T.D. or aspiring T.D. expects a trade off, in the form of increased votes. As a result clinic work is inevitably personalised around one politician.

Not surprisingly, there is a complete separation between the specific policies of the T.D. and his actual constituency clinic service. All of the three main parties attempt to establish their political base through holding clinics. And the pattern is inevitably the same- despite the political differences. Thus in the Labour party, both the extreme right-winger Steve Coughlan and the 'Militant' leaning left-winger Michael D. Higgins both placed considerable emphasis on their clinic every Saturday in the ITGWU halls.

The very flexibility of clinics means that they may also be consid-

ered by left-wing parties such as the S.L.P. on the basis that they offer a relatively straight forward means of creating a base in an area. The question, however is what sort of base. For clinics are essentially geared towards elected parties. They establish a bond between a party and an area within which the traditional rules are maintained. The T.D. or the councillor is the active problem solver whereas the people are passive and unable to take action to solve their own problems. Instead of providing a means of organising working people to take action, they are geared to getting extra votes in return for the politicians ability to do something.

For revolutionaries the central emphasis must always be on the self-activity of the working class. If we proclaim that socialism will not be achieved through the parliament, then we must also break down the illusion it is the T.D. or for that matter the party which has the power to win any changes. Where there are issues in an area- such as for example faults in the housing- we must argue for action through the tenants association than rely on any politician or party. In the long run, it is the confidence that is built through such independent action that provides the real basis for revolutionary change. The credibility of a revolutionary party, therefore can only be established through its ability to lead such agitation.



By Kieran Allen

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The recent events in Ringaskiddy have again brought the subject of asbestos to public attention. Why all the fuss? What is asbestos, and, is it really dangerous? What are the 'safe' levels of asbestos? In this article we will attempt to answer some of these questions.

ASBESTOS IS A FINE fibrous mineral of which there are four main types. The material must be mined, milled and fabricated and each state a fine penetrating dust is produced. Asbestos is widely used industrially, especially in fire-proofing, the reinforcement of cement in building materials and the manufacture of brake linings and other friction materials. This demand has led to increased production of asbestos to the present level of 4 million tonnes per year.

The use of asbestos fibre as an insulating and fire-proofing material goes back to antiquity. The adverse effects of asbestos on man were observed as early as the first century A.D. when Pliny, the Roman historian, noticed that slaves who wove asbestos fibre into cloth developed a sickness of the lungs. This was the first written evidence for the condition we now know as asbestosis, scarring of lung tissue.

ASBESTOSIS

The first description of death due to asbestosis was given in 1900, on an autopsy of a worker who had spent 14 years in an asbestos textile factory. Since then asbestos and the associated conditions of lung cancer and mesothelioma (a rare type of cancer of the lining of the lung) have been reported from all parts of the world.

Asbestos is not just a hazard to those working with it, those who come into contact with it indirectly are also in danger. Recently increasing evidence has been emerging of deaths from asbestos related diseases among people WHO HAVE HAD NO DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE SUBSTANCE. Asbestos fibres are being found increasingly in the air and some have even been found in town water supplies! In the London Hospital

eleven out of seventy-six patients with the kind of cancer (mesothelioma) that is caused by asbestos had never worked with it or been exposed to it at home, they just happened to have lived within half a mile of a large asbestos factory. Asbestos filters are commonly used to clarify beer and other alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, and asbestos fibres have been found in these. As it can take anything from 12 to 40 years after exposure to asbestos before developing cancer the damage caused by this pollution will not be known for decades.

Meanwhile, the pollution

continues, a recent secret British Government Report, leaked to the newspaper 'Socialist Worker' has refused to recommend safe substitutes for asbestos. The report admits that there are alternatives to asbestos in virtually every area in which it is used. But the report notes that to change would involve 'some extra cost'.

PROFITS

The 'extra cost' being referred to is of course, the 'cost' to the large asbestos companies whose profits grow larger from year to year. The fact that the change will save lives doesn't enter into their calculations. Recent figures from America have estimated that the one million people who are employed or have been employed in the asbestos industry up to 40% that is, four hundred thousand will die from asbestos related diseases. These are estimates only for the people directly exposed to asbestos, no estimate has been made of those affected indirectly.

No one can say that there is a safe level of asbestos dust. The official Government standard for asbestos is 2 fibres per cubic centimeter for white asbestos and 0.2 f/cc for blue asbestos, but this type has since been banned completely. Unfortunately, the standards are not being applied especially in the lagging industry. Two fibres per cubic centimeter seems a very small amount of

asbestos, but it is equivalent to inhaling about twenty million fibres in an average eight hour working day. No one can say that inhaling twenty million asbestos fibres a day is not dangerous! There have been repeated calls for new lower standards, in Britain the T.U.C. has called for a new standard of 0.2 f/cc for white asbestos and eventually a complete ban on the use of asbestos. In America there has been a call for a standard of 0.1 f/cc, the asbestos industry have said that they would not be able to enforce such a low standard and that the industry would be forced to close down.

A few points should be made here about the standards:-

- they only apply to asbestosis, not to lung cancer or mesothelioma.
- the errors in measurement of the fibres can be up to +/- 50%
- the method of measuring the fibre-level only counts those fibres that can be seen using an optical microscope but it is the very small fibres, the one's that cannot be seen by the microscope that are thought to cause cancer.

No one can say that there is a 'safe' level of asbestos dust but 'interested parties' have assessed the evidence of the risks and have decided that a level of 2 f/cc can be considered an acceptable risk. Interested parties usually mean some expert in a particular area of technology, but these experts have no special qualifications that 'sanctifies' their decision to declare a level of risk acceptable.

FIGHT

The workers themselves through the trade union movement must fight for a complete ban on asbestos and other dangerous chemicals used in industry. The present standards for asbestos were only brought about by the struggle of the workers themselves. Direct action is needed to stop processes or ban substances. London dockworkers refused to handle blue asbestos long before the hazards were officially admitted and its import

finally banned. As there can be no safe level for a substance causing cancer their levels are just compromises and workers should negotiate the lowest they can get. Workers and the trade union movement should fight for the rights of workers to appoint safety representatives. It is important that health and safety be dealt with at the level of shop-steward organisations as lack of communication between reps and stewards could lead to splits on the shop floor. Only the workers themselves can decide what is an acceptable risk, the final level of acceptability should be hammered out between the management and trade union officials.

Unfortunately two crucial rights, the right to information and right to advice will be pretty useless to many reps as they will not have access to them because of technical problems involved. Safety is no different from any other

trade union matter. Just because 'science' is involved, this does not mean that management advice and information is objectively correct. It should be remembered that science is not neutral, it has been shaped and developed by the ruling class for its own benefit. Workers need their own sources of information. To a limited extent some trade unions provide this but not nearly enough. In Britain, the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (B.S.S.R.S.) produces a Hazard Bulletin which gives workers information about health safety and hazards at work. A similar group is badly needed in Ireland to supplement the work being done by the trade unions.

'How could the essential character of the capitalist method of production be better shown than by the need for forcing upon it by Acts of Parliament the simplest appliances for maintaining cleanliness and health' - Karl Marx (Capital). In the long run the only effective safeguard for the health of the workforce is in its total control over the production procedure.

B.S.S.R.S.
9, Poland Street,
London W.1.



Results of Asbestosis, premature ageing and swelling of hands, the man in the foreground of picture is pictured with his father

the dust that kills in the name of profit

by
Brian McKenna

REVIEWS

HARRY MCSHANE, WHO WAS 87 a few weeks ago, is in every sense a revolutionary activist. He is president of his A.U.E.W. branch, an active speaker, and a fierce critic of those who, unlike him, have forgotten their basic socialist principles. He remains a fighter for socialism, for workers power. And he knows that the power is rooted in a strong rank and file movement of workers built by revolutionaries WITHIN the workplace.

NO MEAN FIGHTER, the result of three years of taped conversations with Joan Smith, is not a book of memoirs, but an attempt to APPLY history to the struggle today, to learn from the movement that Harry has been a part of all his life.

As a young engineering apprentice, he attended the open air political meetings at Glasgow Green, fertile ground for socialist ideas, among them those of Daniel DeLeon, the American syndicalist. Though he underestimated the key role the revolutionary party, DeLeon taught socialists one important lesson - that all organisation must be based on the rank and file workers, in workshops and plants, linked and strengthened by their solidarity.

The other element of Harry's political ideas come from John MacLean, whose classes in Marxist economics drew hundreds of trade unionists every Sunday afternoon. As a Marxist, Harry recognised that a revolution could only be achieved through political organisation - and joined the British Socialist Party in 1918.

REFORMIST

He distrusted the new leaders of the B.S.P., like Hyndman; they were reformists, hostile to the ideas of 'class struggle', revolution and extra-parliamentary activity that Harry and his comrades stood for. In the event, they abandoned class politics for patriotism in 1914, and fully justified Harry's suspicion of them.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 drove home the central lesson; the need to organise for the challenge to State power. And on a very different level, it was confirmed again in 1919, in Glasgow.

In 1915, the shop stewards movement had arisen on the Clyde in response to the attempt of government and employers to enforce dilution of labour. The jingoism of their union leaders had forced the Clyde workers towards a clear anti-war stance, especially when conscription was introduced in 1917. Two years later, in January 1919, a struggle began for the 40-hour week.

The 40-hour strike had a central strength; its demands linked employed and unemployed workers in a single struggle.

Harry McShane



Harry McShane & Joan Smith
Pluto £2.95.

No Mean Fighter

Today, at the fight for a 35-hour week gets under way in Britain, that experience is closer to us than ever.

In the end the soldiers, tanks and machine guns that were sent to Glasgow defeated the strike, and its leaders were jailed or deported. But it was there that the myth of the Red Clyde was born.

It had been a genuine mass struggle, a dangerous challenge to the State (according to Lloyd George). The myth arose later. One after another, its leaders (Gallagher, Shirlwell, Kirkwood) joined the Communist Party or took the parliamentary road. That was when the 'Red Clyde' became a ticket of admission to the best circles a credential with which countless ex-militants have justified themselves by looking backward.

Harry McShane is the exception. For him the Red Clyde was political practice, to be developed and transformed through struggle. He remained committed to the idea of rank and file organisation, and to Marxism as the theory and practice of revolutionary socialism.

1919 had shown the power of the State; the 1917 Revolution had shown how it could be overthrown. So Harry joined the CP in 1922, and watched it follow the zigzags of Soviet foreign policy, from the lunacy of 'class against class', through its subordination to the 'popular front' to its rise to fashion during the War - when it gained 50,000 members and lost its working class base.

Finally, in 1951, the CP's 'British Road to Socialism' announced that discovery of a new form of struggle - parliament! In 1953, Harry McShane left the Communist Party, went back to work in Glasgow, and returned to political agitation on the shop floor.

How Long Will South Africa Survive?

R. W. Johnson
Macmillan £3.95

South Africa has long presented a problem to the western capitalist democracies which feed on its economic system while claiming to deplore the moral unacceptability of apartheid. Western powers have so far confined themselves to mouthing pious nonsense about human dignity and peaceful transition while deriving enormous profits from the system designed to protect the interests of the Afrikaner business class.

Initially the displaced English speakers were horrified that the dulleards of the veldt had assumed such a dominant role but given the benefits they have enjoyed since 1948 they have been content to make their peace with the National Party. It is clear they will see their lot increasingly in supporting the Nationalists in defending the laager.

R. W. Johnson has provided a superbly written and convincing account of the circumstances in which that laager might be threatened. In the process he has explained the crucial way in which South Africa is integrated into the Western capitalist economies and demolished a number of myths used by the Right to justify support for Pretoria.

Within the left, Harry is best known for his work in the Unemployed Workers Movement, of which he was Scottish Secretary. It drew in thousands of unemployed people, gave them the confidence to march up and down a street TWICE when they were refused permission to march, and built a new self-confidence among the unemployed, a confidence in their own ability to fight.

In the end, its achievements were limited. The trade union movement had been broken in 1926, with the betrayal of the General Strike; and the key to a strong movement of the unemployed lay in their ability to link up with employed workers.

Once again the task for the working class is to take possession of their own movement. As revolutionaries, we can learn from the living movement that this book records, and show in practice that, as Harry says, 'socialism is the creative act of the working class to solve the crisis of capitalism'.

After all since Sharpeville in 1960 and the assassination of the chief theoretician Verwoerd in 1966 the regime has survived the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, the Afro-Arab rapprochement after the 1973 Middle East war, the rise in oil prices and the abortive involvement in Angola. The implications of all these events for the regime may not have been fully assessed but its response has been flexible and devious.

Johnson explains with the tension usually reserved for a thriller, the means South Africa has adopted to preserve herself - attempted detente with some conservative black African states, intervention in Angola to protect French, American and her own capital, the advantages of high world gold prices and the consequent leverage Kissinger and the US Treasury could exert by manipulating the markets.

Johnson envisages that South Africa will eventually become involved in another war on her northern frontier - having postponed such intervention for as long as possible. Foreign war would compromise the domestic repression which will be increasingly imperative by partly politicising and partly eliminating the armed forces.

The ever widening and deepening maelstrom of domestic repression will further distort the economy and make it a bad investment. It will provide a self-perpetuating mythology of isolation and withdrawal for the Verkrampes on Vorster's right, sustained as they are by a belief in racial superiority and a dogma of a chosen people.

It is a paradox, but no accident that Pretoria has an ally in Tel Aviv - which is one of the fascinating details to emerge from this study. Read it to find out about the Israeli South Africa axis, the mysterious assassination of the Congolese President Ngouabi and for a new perspective on the 1976 US presidential election.

If ever there was proof of the intimate relationship between South Africa and the west, of capitalism as an international system, it is here. South Africa is an extreme and depraved example of class and racial oppression and is thus a reflection of the system under which we live ourselves. The problem will not go away, is not remote and is bound to embroil us all. Paul Neesom

THE TOM ROBINSON BAND was one of the many bands which inspired over 80,000 working class kids to show their hatred of racism and the National Front at a huge carnival held in London at the end of April. The event was one of the biggest anti-racist festivals ever held in Britain and went so far as to astonish its organisers. At the festival Tom Robinson remarked that his record about the 'The Winter of '79' when the N.F. are strong and taking over the powers of state and putting all your radical friends in jail was a prediction (which he no longer holds). Tens of thousands of people rocking against racism, unemployment, and Mrs. Thatcher dreams for the future, undoubtedly helped change his mind. The T.R.B. was formed in January last year and hit it big mostly through a series of lucky breaks and the bands talent to play gutsy rock and roll which many young working class rockers identified with. Their music had something different, and lyrically Tom Robinson wrote the kind of stuff many kids wanted to hear. 'Power in the Darkness' their first L.P. is an excellent introduction to a band that has been able to gain a steady following by playing good solid rock that's kept tight and uncomplicated while Robinson lashes out on vocals attacking the very worst aspects of capitalism in Britain. The opening track kicks off with a hard stinging guitar that we are more accustomed to hearing from the Stones when they were at their best. Robinson bursts into 'Up Against the Wall' an attack on the powers that be, and a prediction of their fate yet to come.

High Rise fencing on the playground

High rise housing all around
High rise prices in the high street

High time to pull it all down.
Can you hear it, can you hear it

Panic in the County Hall -
Whatehall up against the wall.

Winter of '79 is a prediction of how things could be in the event of a Right Wing backlash in Britain;

Do you remember the Winter of '79

All the gay geezers were put inside

Coloured kids were being crucified

A few fought back and a few folks died

In the Winter of '79.

Power in the Darkness contains a number of songs that are warnings of what is to come unless the N.F. and their hangers on are beaten back by organised action by thousands of workers. Recently doing an interview for the N.M.E. Robinson remarked; 'Politics isn't party broadcasts and general elections, it's your kid sister who can't get an abortion, yer best mate getting Paki-bashed, or sent down for possessing one joint of marijuana, the G.L.C. deciding joint of marijuana, the G.L.C. deciding which bands we can't see It's every day life for rock fans, for anyone who hasn't a cosy job or rich parents'. The title track from 'Power in the Darkness' sums it up with what is undoubtedly the best number on the album. Excellent organ from Mark Ambler screams out the introduction backed by heavy pounding drums as Robinson begins to lay scorn on the 'free' society and what the 'Torys mean by freedom';

Freedom from the Reds and Blacks and the criminals,
prostitutes, pansies and punks
Football hooligans juvenile delinquents, lesbians and left wing scum....

REVIEW DERMOT BYRNE



'Dolphin' Taylor drums/vcl; Tom Robinson bs/vcl; Danyu Kustov gtr/vcl; Mark Ambler org/pno.

The TRB has produced a fine album and no doubt they've much more to offer that will be well worth a listen. If there's one criticism to be made of Power in the Darkness it's probably that the sentiments expressed in the songs are too narrowly confined to the struggle against Racism in Britain and not enough to as Robinson says, 'everyday life for rock fans'. Politics particularly for socialists is how working people see their day to day life. To this extent waking up in the morning to face the boss, or getting rapped off in the pub, or being frustrated by the person behind the bars at the dole queue is all part of our existence under capitalism. Nevertheless T.R.B. fans will undoubtedly be looking out for songs which express just these realities in the future. As the struggle to defeat racism and the rule of capital hots up in Britain working people themselves will generate new forms of music worked out in the struggle from day to day that will most likely be the coming together of various forms of black and white music which will be a living music whenever workers gather. Whatever form that music takes the T.R.B. has pioneered a new approach to the rock song, and done it excellently. Bling Boy Fuller a Black Blues Singer from the 40's once wrote a song called 'you don't know my mind'.

'Up in the mornin at a quarter to eight
Meet you down at the factory gate
You don't know, no you don't know my mind
When you see me laugh 'in' I'm laughin just to keep from cryin.'

Fuller like so many other blues singers of his day was submerged in the struggle against white domination and racism and wrote and sung some gutsy blues pieces about it. The T.R.B. in Britain today are submerged in the same sort of struggle and the enemy is as deadly as the Klu Klux Klan.

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